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Soviet Union-Eastern Europe

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This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the USSR - Eastern Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers
To Meet on December 15

The Warsaw Pact foreign ministers will reportedly convene in Moscow on Monday. It will be their first formal meeting since 1973.

[REDACTED] the Soviets want to "exchange views" on several subjects, including implementation of the European security accord. [REDACTED] the Soviets had presented no proposals or document for consideration, but that they might recommend the creation of a new committee for foreign policy coordination.

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The Soviets have for some time been eager to strengthen the Pact's political consultative machinery and other Pact institutions in foreign policy cooperation. They could conceivably be trying to upgrade the largely moribund office of the Pact's secretary general--currently Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin--into a permanent multinational body.

[REDACTED] Romanian Foreign Minister Manescu would probably not attend the meeting because the Romanian Grand National Assembly is scheduled to meet on the same day--a familiar and convenient excuse used in the past by the Romanians to express displeasure over Moscow's efforts to tighten its grip on the Pact's political machinery.

[REDACTED] there were precedents for sending deputies to sessions of the Warsaw Pact foreign ministers. Romanian officials last April asserted that the Soviets were pushing for the establishment of a permanent Pact committee of foreign ministers, but that Bucharest intended to resist these efforts. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Polish Congress Ends, Re-elects Leadership

The Polish party congress ended Friday with a strong endorsement of party leader Gierek and his policies. The few personnel changes at the top strengthen the Gierek team.

Earlier in the day the new Central Committee met and re-elected virtually the entire leadership. The only casualty was the discredited Franciszek Szlachcic, whose removal from the Politburo had long been expected. The Politburo was expanded from 11 to 14 members by the promotion of four of the five candidate members.

Two new Politburo candidate members were chosen: Jerzy Lukaszewicz, party secretary for press and propaganda matters, who has been considered a "comer" by many Poles; and Tadeusz Wrzaszczyk, who was appointed head of the Planning Commission and a vice premier this fall and is a strong supporter of Gierek's efforts to use Western credits and technology to modernize the economy.

The party secretariat was expanded to ten full members by the promotion of Zdzislaw Zandowski and Ryszard Frelek. The Central Committee was increased from 115 to 140 members. Approximately one third are serving for the first time.
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Soviet-Egyptian Debt Talks
End Without Agreement

The latest round of Soviet-Egyptian talks on debt repayment has ended apparently in a stalemate. The authoritative Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram* reported yesterday that a Soviet delegation that was in Cairo negotiating over the past three weeks had returned to Moscow. The Egyptians said no date has been set for further talks.

Not surprisingly, *Al Ahram* claimed that it was Soviet inflexibility that accounted for the breakdown in the talks. Cairo reportedly sought a 10-year grace period on its debt which totals at least \$2 billion, repayment of the debt over a 30- to 40-year period, and no interest charges on the military portion of the debt. Moscow apparently was willing to stretch out the repayment period somewhat, but would not bend to Cairo's other demands.

The Soviet delegation at this latest round of talks was headed by Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Grishin, and the two sides apparently did make some progress in negotiating a trade agreement for 1976.
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Podgorny in Kabul: A Lackluster Visit

Soviet Chief of State Podgorny's hastily scheduled visit to Afghanistan on December 9-10 brought few concrete results.

The consultations were no doubt useful, however, in reminding Kabul of the high priority Moscow attaches to maintaining good relations with its South Asian neighbors. The Afghans also probably were pleased to have an opportunity to reassure their largest economic and military aid benefactor that President Daoud's recent purges of generally Soviet-oriented leftist officials were not intended to signal a fundamental change in relations.

Podgorny's entourage included senior economic and military aid officials, but there is no indication that any new agreements were reached. The Soviets and the Afghans agreed to extend for an additional ten years their July 1931 treaty on neutrality and mutual nonaggression.

The Soviets were not able to obtain a stronger Afghan endorsement of Moscow's pet Asian collective security concept in the joint communique issued at the conclusion of the visit. The statement, in fact, omits even the general reference to a "security system" which appeared in the communique issued after Daoud visited Moscow last year. Daoud may have held out on this--despite what US diplomats in Kabul report was considerable pressure from Podgorny--because he did not want to imply recognition of Afghanistan's existing border with Pakistan. The Afghans are also loath to endorse a proposal that has no Asian adherent other than Mongolia.
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